

The Composer's Thoughts

Gary Ryan on his Compositions for Guitar

Gary Ryan has been composing for many years;

"I have always been very interested in electronic sound and musical sounds in our surroundings. I was captivated by the music of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop when I was a boy and have always listened to and enjoyed an enormous range of music, channeling my keyboard ability into this area. I have also written several quite extensive scores for the theatre using synthesizers and am still endlessly fascinated by the new musical dimensions that this medium has opened up."

It was a similar curiosity to explore the sound world of the guitar that inspired Gary Ryan to compose for the instrument;

"Having learnt and performed a huge range of the guitar repertoire and gradually come to know the instrument in great depth, I have increasingly become interested in writing new music for it which challenges an audience's perceptions of what the guitar is about.

Scenes from The Wild West (and **Scenes from Brazil**) were written to try and present the classical guitar in a different light. The word 'classical' is a misrepresentation of the guitar as I know and love it. It engenders prejudice in people who have never heard a guitar in concert and suggests concert repertoire that we have little direct contact with (but should of course strive to become more familiar with).

For me the word 'classical' is about a way of learning; about developing and refining one's playing to an extremely high level and gaining a level of technical control and musical understanding that should enable us to convey music from many different spheres. It is not however about a 'proper' way of playing or a 'correct' school of technique.

As guitarists we can learn an enormous amount from many different styles of playing and should always remember that the guitar sits comfortably in music from across the world and the ages like no other concert instrument. The guitar is mainly viewed as an instrument with Spanish and Latin American roots but there is also a very strong North American connection with a more contemporary resonance that I am trying to convey in some of my compositions.

While we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the players and composers of the past, things can and must move on or the guitar will die as a solo concert instrument. We, as performers, teachers and students must strive to show its broader true potential and my pieces are offered as a small token to that end. They contain much of what I have always enjoyed about the guitar and music in general and I hope you enjoy them as much as I have enjoyed writing them."